

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1915.

Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second Class Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid

DAILY, Per Month	\$0.50
DAILY, Per Year	5.00
SUNDAY, Per Month	0.05
SUNDAY, Per Year	0.50
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month	0.55
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year	6.50

FOREIGN RATES

DAILY, Per Month	1.25
DAILY, Per Year	12.50
SUNDAY, Per Month	0.10
SUNDAY, Per Year	1.00
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month	1.30
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year	13.00

THE EVENING SUN, Per Month . . . 25

THE EVENING SUN (Foreign), Per Mo. 1.00

All checks, money orders, etc., to be made payable to THE SUN.

Published daily, including Sunday, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association at 150 Nassau street, in the Borough of Manhattan, New York. President and Treasurer, William C. Rock, 150 Nassau street; Vice-President, Edwin J. Mitchell, 150 Nassau street; Secretary, C. E. Lusk, 150 Nassau street.

If our friends who favor us with manuscripts and illustrations for publication wish to have rejected articles returned they must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

Discussed as to Its General Aspect by Mr. Wickham.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: There is one prime consideration which should predispose everybody to a favorable consideration of the new constitution adopted by the delegates in Albany on September 10, 1915.

It is not the work of mere political partisanship. It embodies thirty-three proposed amendments to the existing Constitution, thirty-two of which received the votes not only of a majority of the members of the convention, the Republican party, but, as well, of a majority of the Democrats voting. This was a fitting result of the spirit which pervaded the convention from the outset. Of the 168 delegates 116 were Republican and fifty-two Democratic. A Democrat, the Hon. Morgan J. O'Brien, was by Republican votes, elected second vice-president of the convention; three of the seven members of the rules committee appointed by President Root were Democrats, and a fair representation was given to members of the minority party on all important committees.

Early in the session an effort on the part of some of the Republican delegates to inject a partisan issue into the deliberations of the convention by committing it to the work of the reapportionment of the Senate and Assembly districts was successfully resisted, and after a debate, in which opportunity was furnished for a full exchange of views on the subject, a resolution was adopted on July 1 not to change the rules governing reapportionment laid down in the present Constitution. A decision on the part of Senator Root and other leaders of the convention not to take up the question of reapportionment, but to leave it to the Legislature, under the provisions of the existing Constitution, was steadfastly maintained against the insistence of a number of delegates who thought a Republican party advantage might be secured by having the convention make the reapportionment. It was the opinion of a large number of the delegates of both parties that the elimination of the question of reapportionment would make it possible to consider all other questions which might arise on their merits, free from political partisanship. The result justified that opinion. The great questions of the reorganization of the State executive government, reform in the method of providing for the financial needs of the State, legislative powers and methods of procedure, home rule for cities and counties, reform in judicial procedure and in the organization and jurisdiction of the courts, besides many questions of less importance, were debated and decided without division on party lines. When the session was drawing to a close ex-Senator Edgar T. Brackett uttered this protest:

"The great Republican party, with more than forty members in this convention, sent here by people—the delegates of the great Republican party sent here by people—that expected that the convention would do something to continue the forces of good government by helping the Republican party, have deliberately surrendered their opportunity here and passed the State over to the control of New York city and Tammany Hall. Don't let us have any misunderstanding about it, sent here for the very purpose among other things, of doing good to the people of the State by preventing the greater city from controlling the State, sent here for the purpose of doing whatever it properly could to maintain continuous Republican supremacy and thereby good government in the State; the influences that control this convention have deliberately declined a provision which would have protected the Republican party in the State, and good government in the State, and have permitted a provision to remain in force which inside of the next three or four years will give the Democrats of the State and Tammany Hall the control of the Legislature of the State through the control of the Senate."

The "influences that controlled the convention" had a higher idea of their commission from the people than merely the adoption of provisions continuing Republican supremacy in the State. Their views were more in accord with those of the Secretary of State, Mr. Hugo, as expressed in his opening address to the convention when he said: "Gentlemen of the convention, it is your high privilege to interpret the spirit, experience, hopes and aspirations of eleven millions of people and to write that interpretation into a proposed constitution which, if adopted by the people of the State,

will prescribe and regulate their activities as an organized State for the next twenty years."

In the light of Mr. Brackett's indignant protest, it is positively funny to read in a leading Democratic daily newspaper an argument to prove that the new constitution ought to be beaten at the polls "because it is a partisan constitution designed to perpetuate the political power of the up-State Republican machine."

It is hard to figure out how any Democratic newspaper can expect to fool its readers into believing that the new constitution is the product of Republican partisanship, in the face of the records of the votes in the convention and the expressions by leading Democratic delegates during the debates at Albany.

The records of the convention are open and the people cannot long be deceived as to the character and spirit of its work. The fact is that a convention of 168 delegates spent four and a half months, first in listening to the views of delegations, organized bodies and individual citizens respecting conditions calling for change in the fundamental law; next, in the consideration of upward of 800 proposed amendments to the Constitution, and then in the formulation in committee of measures which were reported to the convention and there debated, in free, open, intelligent discussion, leading finally to the adoption of thirty-three amendments which are recommended to the approval of the people. Included among these are a number of measures which have been advocated in the platforms of both political parties, such as the short ballot, the State budget, home rule for cities and reform of judicial procedure.

Doubtless, as Senator Root suggested in his closing address to the convention, any one might sit down in his library and write a far shorter and simpler constitution, which would read well and perhaps better fit the abstract needs of the State than the revised constitution now recommended. But this one is written to meet the requirements of ten million people, in the light of an experience of 138 years of existence as a State. Many evils have developed since the Constitution of 1784, which the new constitution seeks to meet by positive and negative provisions. It requires the expression of many more details to meet such a condition than would be required if a constitution were being written for a new Commonwealth.

"The chaos that characterizes the general structure of the government," writes one of the latest critics of the Constitution and government of the State of New York, "runs through the executive department and all of its ramifications. . . . It is quite clear that the problem presented here involves more than a mere readjustment of parts—a rearrangement of powers and of departments, bureaus and divisions of the administration. In fact it goes to the very root of the whole system of government." The convention grappled courageously with that problem. The amendments which it has proposed go "to the very root of the whole system of government." They seek to end "the chaos that now characterizes the general structure of the government." They seek to couple power with responsibility—"official leadership in the formulation of policies and the concentration of public opinion at elections on the work of the government already done or omitted and work proposed for the future." To accomplish this requires more provisions than otherwise would be expected in a constitution. But if the new instrument be carefully examined it will be found to express on the whole with succinctness and clarity the rules which are to govern the action of the electorate, its representatives and its servants of different classes in the future conduct of the State.

Doubtless fault can and will be found with many of the provisions in the new constitution. There are always opponents of any change. There are always critics who complain that much better provisions might have been made. But it may be safely asserted that no more comprehensive effort boldly to meet and remedy evils that have developed in the practical workings of a State government has been made; that no more forward looking plan of improvement ever has been submitted by a constitutional convention to the approval of the electorate than is embodied in the revised Constitution of 1915.

GEORGE W. WICKHAM.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., September 18.

Mohanse.

If any great corporation—the New York Central, the United States Steel Corporation, the Interborough Rapid Transit—should plan to create an institution housing several thousands of persons, and pipe the sewage from it into the Croton mains, State and city would unite to prevent the pollution of the water supply. We should be treated to an outburst of anger that would consume the scheme before it was completely started, and the professions of its promoters that the effluent from their establishment would be rendered innocuous before it was poured down our throats would not mitigate the popular wrath.

Yet the State of New York purposes to do this very thing at Mohansee Lake. A great insane asylum and a school for boys are to be built, and they are to be drained into a pond that supplies part of our drinking water.

The sewage is to be modified in settling tanks, and by the use of certain chemicals, before it is served to us at the drinking fountains, and we are told that it probably will not make us sick, but if it does, the State, on becoming convinced of its responsibility, will stop poisoning us as soon as it conveniently can.

The SUN cannot see why the State should do itself what it would not allow a citizen to do. Particularly it should not constitute itself a principal offender against hygiene and good sanitary practice at a time when it is compelling the taxpayers and business community to expend enormous sums to maintain healthful conditions. And as the matter is now before Governor WHITMAN, we await with curiosity the announcement of his attitude on the subject, that curiosity being somewhat increased by recollection of his eloquent words, at the recent convention of health authorities, in behalf of a larger appropriation for the State health service in the future.

In Plymouth Church.

That scoffers at religion should find in the distressing scenes enacted at Plymouth Church on Sunday material useful to their unadmirable purposes is as inconceivable as it must be impossible for sensible church folk to find in them solace of atonement by confession. Dr. HILLIS is a good preacher and a bad business man. He made money honestly and handled it foolishly. Cursed with "temperament," he got into a bad mess and made a show of himself.

It is not to be doubted that the deferred agonies of remorse are genuine. If, cheap. On the other hand, there is no reason to deny the possibility of a certain ecstasy in the impulsive act of martyrdom.

So far as the printed reports reveal, the reverend doctor has not broken laws human or divine, but has erred in trying to render that dual service, always easily justified with "good motive" on the Mamon side, against which ten thousand pulpits thunder. The courts of law can settle the one difficulty, the court of conscience can dispose of the other.

When a preacher gets into trouble and makes proper reparation, the ungodly overlook the reparation and the congregation of the righteous ministers too generously the offense. The Brooklyn minister seems to have been foolish, not wicked, in striving to square his obligations, he is decent, not heretic.

Leaving ecclesiastical authorities to settle the churchly values of the incident, humanists may view the affair as fundamentally literary. Probably the preacher's consciousness of error and impending trouble in past weeks has strengthened the wings of the eloquence for which he is famed. A perfect man would be a perfectly unrepentant preacher.

The pastor of Plymouth will get out of this scrape, and then what sermons the old church in Brooklyn will hear! Perhaps there will be a novel to stand beside "Robert Elsmere" and "The Inside of the Cup" as a clean cross section of the mind of the priest and mundane perplexities; royalties to endow a School of Common Sense and Good Taste for Temperamental Pulpiters.

Satisfied Democrats.

Against the candidate of the Democratic organization for the nomination for District Attorney the familiar cry of "Tammany Hall" was raised ineffectively. Judge SWANN has been so long and creditably in the public eye that this ancient denunciation carried no weight. The record he has made on the bench refutes the suggestion that he is the tool of faction or the creature of clique. The charge of subservience ceased before it was well begun.

It is not necessary for him to protest his sincerity or to proclaim his capacity. No rival for the nomination assails him as the puppet of another or charges him with enjoying an unearned reputation for sagacity and ability. His designation met the wishes of a great, an overwhelming majority of the Democrats of this county, and the progress of his canvass gives evidence of their satisfaction over his impending nomination.

Judge SWANN enjoys immunity from assault such as few of his predecessors have known, and the reason for this gratifying freedom from attack appears to be that he deserves the good opinion of those to whom he appeals for votes.

Some Beneficial Results of War.

That war, famine and disease are evolutionary forces that have determined the rise of mankind from the primordial cell to its present high estate is a recognized fact.

The SUN has spoken of one beneficent feature of the present most stupendous war in history, the practical abolition of alcohol by most of the warring nations. Especially significant is the fact that the most enlightened rulers have come to realize the fallacy of hitherto accepted ideas regarding the sustaining qualities of alcohol, and to recognize the teaching of physiology that its action is the reverse. As a result the daily ration of grog has been abolished and in its stead has come abolition of alcohol from the army supplies. The layman has learned that efficiency, the most vital factor in military life, is deteriorated by the use of alcohol, a lesson that all the oratory and sentimentality of temperance speakers and writers had failed to impress. There is no doubt that permanent value will inure to humanity from this lesson.

Now comes the startling announcement that among the possible peace

articles to be discussed the granting of equal rights to the Jews is contemplated by Germany. This provision applies only to the Russian nation among the Allies, for the other nations have been liberal in their treatment of the Jews. Coming from Germany, which itself is under anti-semitic influence, this change of heart is remarkable. In Austria and Germany the prejudice against Jews appears to be chiefly religious, since they are permitted to occupy professional chairs if they allow themselves to be baptized. If these Powers really are sincere let them take the mote from their own eyes first and admit Jews to all the privileges of social and military life from which their faith, or rather their birth, for most of them are agnostics, excludes them now.

The change of heart among the Germans is doubtless due to the fact that the Jew has proved himself efficient in war and peace, and has thus earned for himself the liberty proffered him by the people with whom efficiency is the highest achievement.

That Jews have distinguished themselves in recent wars was shown in the SUN of January 9, 1913, when Dr. DANFEL, the Bulgarian peace delegate, was reported as saying: "They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as their cognate peoples in the kingdom, and no power on earth could induce us to act otherwise. Even Russia, to whom we are much indebted, would never be able to induce us to take up an anti-semitic policy."

General PARIKOFF said: "We are amply satisfied with the military achievements of the Bulgarian Jewish officers and soldiers during the war. They fought with courage and absolute self-sacrifice. Anti-semitic allegations to the contrary are absolute lies and wicked inventions. I was present in all important battles, their behavior in the most critical positions was splendid and deserves full praise and recognition. They have given their life blood for their country no less than the Christian Bulgarians."

M. VENIZELOS said "His Majesty the King of Greece is a great friend of the Jews," and M. SKULIDIS said "their youth fought most courageously for the cause of Greece."

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RUSSIAN STATECRAFT.

Without Teutonic Tutoring, It Could Never Have Succeeded.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Those readers of your newspaper who are more or less acquainted with Russian affairs, be it because they were born in Russia, or because they have lived in the land of the Czar for many years, will laugh at the views expressed by Mr. F. Cunliffe-Owen in THE SUN of September 12. To say that the Grand Duke Nicholas was removed from his post because of German intrigues or because the Duma had demanded his removal is sheer nonsense. As far as Russian dignitaries of German descent are concerned, nearly all of them have long ago been driven out of their positions and sent into the interior of Russia. Only those Russian dignitaries of German descent who were thoroughly Russified generations ago and whose ancestors have been converted to Greek orthodoxy, like General Rennenkampf, and whose loyalty to the Czar is beyond doubt, are allowed to remain in office; and even the number of these Russian generals is so small that they could have no influence on the general course of affairs.

The Duma on the other hand is still as powerless as it was and will remain powerless as long as ultra Germany is in power. May I remind you of the fact that Mr. Goremeyki was invited by the Czar to accept the premiership after the period of Russian revolution in 1907? Mr. Goremeyki is known throughout the Russian Empire as the personification of reaction and old-fashioned conservatism. He is a Russian, not a German. The fact that Mr. Maklakoff, the Minister of the Interior, and General Suchomilov have been replaced by other men is entirely due to scandalous revelations in dealing with the ammunition business. Only after the *Retch* and many other Russian papers published statements that showed the gross negligence of these two men did the Czar find it advisable to dismiss them. Any one who reads the Russian papers knows that.

The Russian Council of National Defense has nothing to do with military and strategic matters. Its mission consists only in organizing the war industry, and it has no say in matters regarding the supreme command of the army. If Grand Duke Nicholas has gone it is only due to the fact that in spite of the "retardation" of the Teutons have succeeded in conquering and capturing five first class and seven second class fortresses within three weeks and in annihilating the Russian army, numbering at least 2,500,000, within four months. If any one likes to call that "strategic genius" he is at liberty to do so, but the Russian people and the Russian Czar do not share the opinion, and they consider Grand Duke Nicholas as the evil spirit of the Russian army.

All the talk of lack of ammunition in the Russian army is nonsense. The Russians never yielded an inch to the foe because of lack of ammunition, but because of disorganization, bad strategy and lack of discipline among men and officers.

Let me further add that not only the Russians, as Mr. Cunliffe-Owen asserts, but also the Poles and all the other Slavonic nations call the Germans "Niemci," which means not blockheads, but simply mugs. When the Russians have learned to hate the Germans, they have succeeded in conquering and capturing five first class and seven second class fortresses within three weeks and in annihilating the Russian army, numbering at least 2,500,000, within four months. If any one likes to call that "strategic genius" he is at liberty to do so, but the Russian people and the Russian Czar do not share the opinion, and they consider Grand Duke Nicholas as the evil spirit of the Russian army.

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